

Acupuncture Nutritional Supplement Survey

Executive Summary

A RESEARCH REPORT BY



METHODOLOGY:

This survey was initiated on February 22, 2012 by MPA Media, publishers of *Acupuncture Today*, *Dynamic Chiropractic*, *Dynamic Chiropractic Practice Insights* and *Massage Today*. The survey was sent to 17,310 doctors of acupuncture and oriental medicine (DAOM). The response rate was 3.1 percent. Like all online surveys, participants tend to “self-select” based upon their interest in the topic presented.

DISCUSSION:

This survey was created to establish the habits and opinions of DAOMs as they relate to the use of nutritional supplements in their practice. Of those surveyed, the first question reveals that 62 percent of DOAMs sell nutritional supplements to their patients, while 38 percent recommend that their patients buy nutritional supplements elsewhere.

Sell Nutritional Supplements

Of those respondents who sell nutritional supplements to their patients, 59 percent say they purchase nutritional products for their patients from four or more different supplement companies, followed by three different companies (17 percent), two different companies (15 percent) and just one company (9 percent).

A quarter of DOAMs who sell nutritional supplements to their patients recommend supplements to almost all of their patients, followed by 23 percent who recommend nutritional supplements to 75 percent of their patients, 22 percent who recommend to half, 22 percent recommend to 25 percent of their patients and 7 percent recommend to 10 percent or less.

Regarding the nutritional supplement company they currently purchase nutritional products from, the majority of respondents (79 percent) totally agree that they understand how to utilize herbs and nutritional supplement in their practice. More than two-thirds (69 percent) totally agree that they can effectively communicate the value of the company’s products to their patients and that they understand what makes the company’s products better than other supplements (67 percent). Nearly two thirds (64 percent) totally agree that there are some nutritional supplement companies that they are not comfortable offering to their patients and another 49 percent say they feel qualified to compare the relative value of nutritional products offered by different companies. The majority of DOAMs (82 percent) totally disagree that all nutritional supplements are pretty much the same.



Recommend Nutritional Supplements

Nearly half (47 percent) of those respondents who prefer to recommend nutritional supplements rather than sell them say that they don't sell because they don't want to carry the inventory, followed by too much hassle for too little money (16 percent), not legally in the DAOM's scope of practice (8 percent), don't feel they have enough knowledge/education (6 percent), and no one in the office to complete the transaction (2 percent). Another 22 percent responded "other," with the majority of these respondents saying they feel selling nutritional supplement to their patients is unethical or a conflict of interest.

All Responding DAOMs

We asked all responding DAOMs to describe their experience with several nutritional supplement companies. Here, more than one-third (34 percent) say they are customers of Standard Process and another 22 percent are very aware of them. More than a quarter (28 percent) say they are a customer of Pure Encapsulations, followed by Nordic Naturals (26 percent), Metagenics (25 percent) and Thorne (25 percent).

While 18 percent say they are a customer of Douglas Labs, 37 percent say they have never heard of the company. Biotics Research appears to have a similar customer percentage (14 percent) and percentage who haven't heard of the company (38 percent) as did NOW Foods/Protocol (13 percent are customers, 34 percent have never heard of them.) All of these companies have significant growth potential with a large portion of the market unaware of them.

Other companies that seem to have growth potential (a large percentage of respondents have not yet heard of them) include Nutri-West (52 percent have never heard of them), Nutra Naturals (52 percent), Anabolic Labs (57 percent), Loomis Institute (60 percent), Dee Cee Labs (61 percent) and Drucker Labs/IntraMax (62 percent).

The majority (93 percent) say they personally take the nutritional supplements that they recommend to their patients, 4 percent do not and 3 percent don't but think they should. The majority (albeit smaller-70 percent) also say that their staff take the nutritional supplements that they recommend to their patients, while nearly a quarter (23 percent) do not and 8 percent don't but the DAOMs think they should.

Nearly two-thirds (32 percent) of respondents have been in practice for 5 to 9 years, followed by 10 to 14 years (25 percent), less than 5 years (14 percent), 15 to 19 years (13 percent), 25 years or more (10 percent) and 20 to 24 years (6 percent).

When asked their age, nearly one third (30 percent) say they are between the ages of 55-64, followed by 35-44 (29 percent), 45-54 (27 percent), 25-34 (8 percent) and 65 or over (5 percent).



CONCLUSION

Overall, it appears that many DAOMs (62 percent) sell nutritional supplements to their patients and are using products from a wide range of nutritional supplement companies — 59 percent purchase nutritional products from four or more companies — and 71 percent of DAOMs who sell supplements directly to their patients recommend to 50 percent or more of their patients (a quarter of that recommend to almost all).

More than three quarters of those who sell to their patients say they understand how to utilize herbs and nutritional supplements in their practice and only 4 percent say that all nutritional supplements are the same, indicating that those who sell the supplements seem to be knowledgeable about the products they sell and stand behind them.

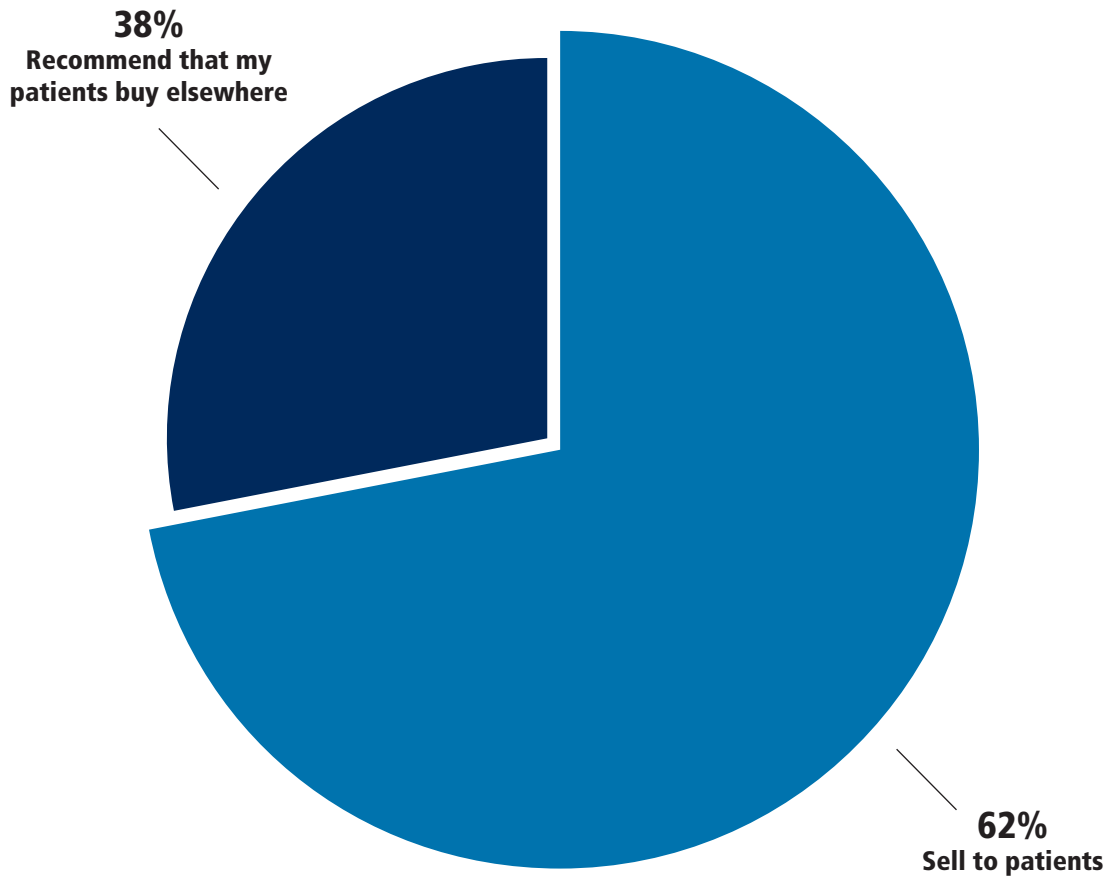
Of those DAOMs who say they only recommended nutritional supplements, nearly half said they didn't because they did not want to carry the inventory of products.

The information in this survey also suggests that some companies are doing a better job marketing their products to DOAMs than others. There appeared to be several companies that have significant growth potential, as many of the respondents have not yet heard of them.

The information in this survey should be used to better understand how DAOMs offer nutritional supplements in their practice and their opinions of the nutritional supplement companies that were included.

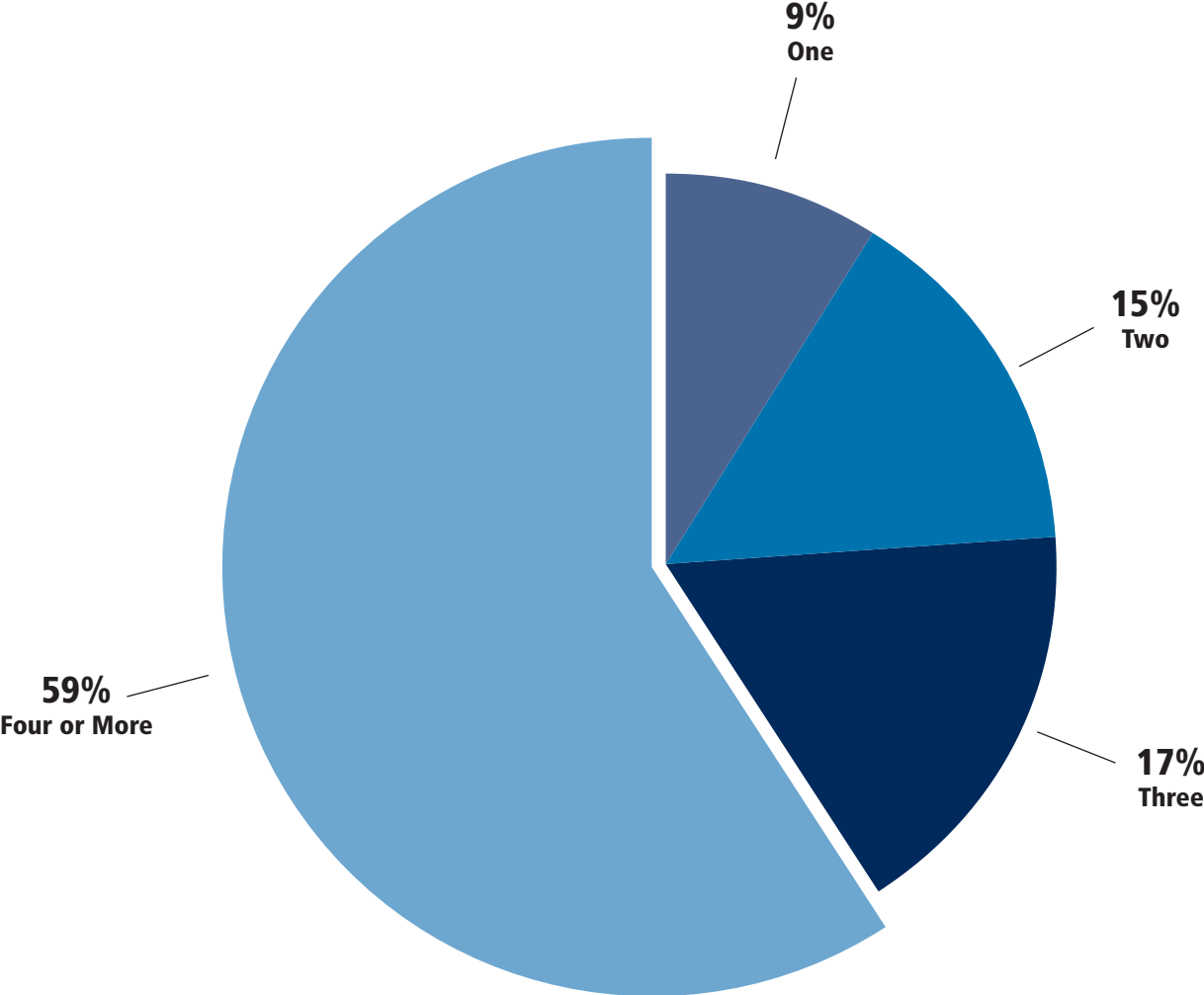


1. How do you handle nutritional supplements (vitamins, minerals, etc.) in your practice?



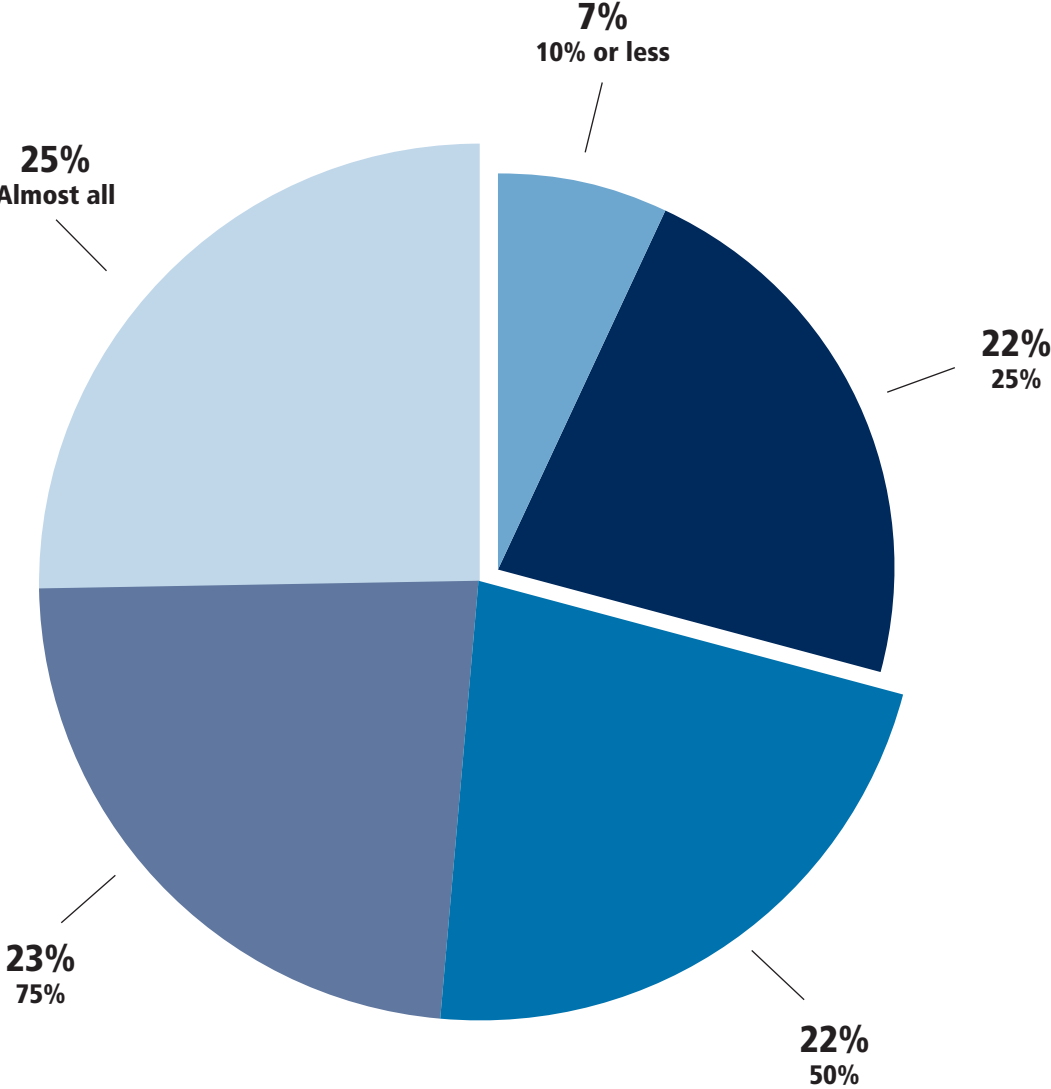
2. How many different supplement companies do you currently purchase nutritional products from for your patients?

Sell Nutritional Supplements



3. Approximately what percentage of your patients do you recommend nutritional supplements to?

Sell Nutritional Supplements



4. How well do you agree with the following statements regarding the nutritional supplement company you currently purchase nutritional products from?

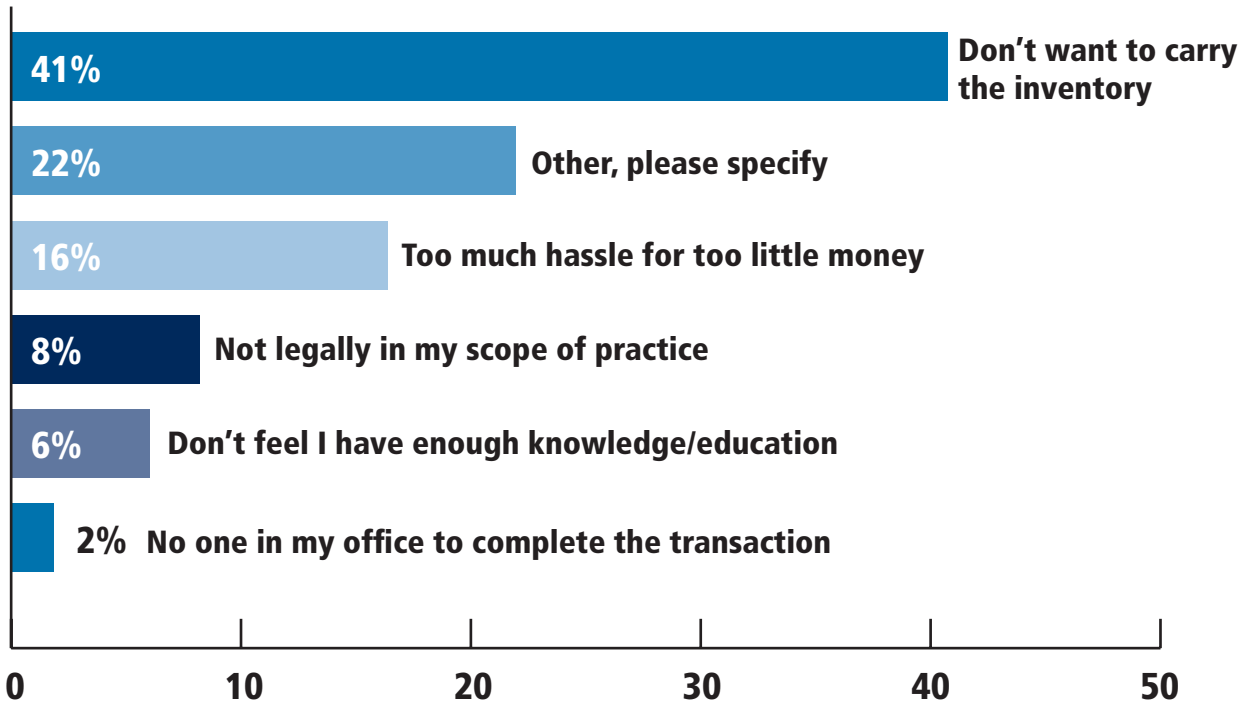
Sell Nutritional Supplements

	Totally agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Totally disagree
I understand how to utilize herbs and nutritional supplements in my practice	79%	16%	1%	3%
I can effectively communicate the value of their products to my patients.	69%	24%	3%	4%
I understand what makes their products better than other supplements.	67%	27%	3%	3%
There are some nutritional supplement companies that I am not comfortable offering to my patients.	64%	16%	7%	12%
I feel qualified to compare the relative value of nutritional products offer by different companies.	49%	37%	10%	4%
All nutritional supplements are pretty much the same.	4%	3%	11%	82%



5. Which is the best answer to why you recommend nutritional supplements rather than sell them?

Recommend Nutritional Supplements



6a. What is your experience with the following nutritional supplement companies?

All Responding DAOMs

	I'm a customer	Very aware	Somewhat aware	Don't know enough about them to buy from them	Don't like them	Never heard of them
Standard Process	34%	22%	19%	7%	6%	12%
Pure Encapsulations	28%	14%	17%	13%	2%	26%
Nordic Naturals	26%	27%	15%	11%	2%	19%
Thorne	25%	17%	14%	14%	2%	28%
Metagenics	25%	28%	20%	13%	5%	10%
Douglas Labs	18%	11%	13%	17%	3%	37%
Biotics Research	14%	11%	15%	21%	1%	38%
NOW Foods/ Protocol	13%	16%	16%	17%	4%	34%
Nutri-West	8%	6%	12%	19%	2%	52%
Dee Cee Labs	8%	4%	6%	18%	2%	61%
Anabolic Labs	7%	3%	7%	24%	2%	57%
Loomis Institute	6%	5%	8%	21%	1%	60%
Drucker Labs/ IntraMax	6%	5%	5%	22%	1%	62%
Nutra Naturals	6%	5%	11%	25%	1%	52%



6b. What is your experience with the following nutritional supplement companies?

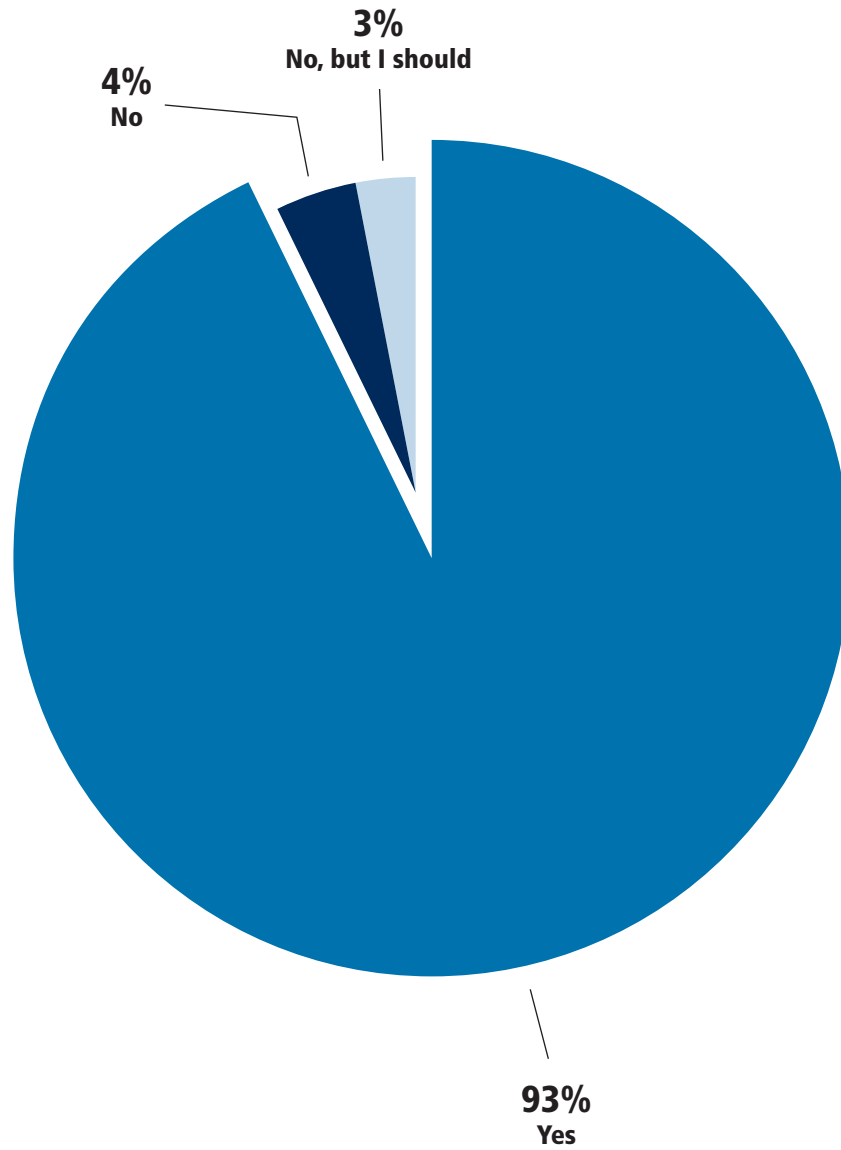
All Responding DAOMs

	I'm a customer	Very aware	Somewhat aware	Don't know enough about them to buy from them	Don't like them	Never heard of them
Drucker Labs/ IntraMax	6%	5%	5%	22%	1%	62%
Dee Cee Labs	8%	4%	6%	18%	2%	61%
Loomis Institute	6%	5%	8%	21%	1%	60%
Anabolic Labs	7%	3%	7%	24%	2%	57%
Nutri-West	8%	6%	12%	19%	2%	52%
Nutra Naturals	6%	5%	11%	25%	1%	52%
Biotics Research	14%	11%	15%	21%	1%	38%
Douglas Labs	18%	11%	13%	17%	3%	37%
NOW Foods/ Protocol	13%	16%	16%	17%	4%	34%
Thorne	25%	17%	14%	14%	2%	28%
Pure Encapsulations	28%	14%	17%	13%	2%	26%
Nordic Naturals	26%	27%	15%	11%	2%	19%
Standard Process	34%	22%	19%	7%	6%	12%
Metagenics	25%	28%	20%	13%	5%	10%



7. Do you personally take the nutritional supplements that you recommend to your patients?

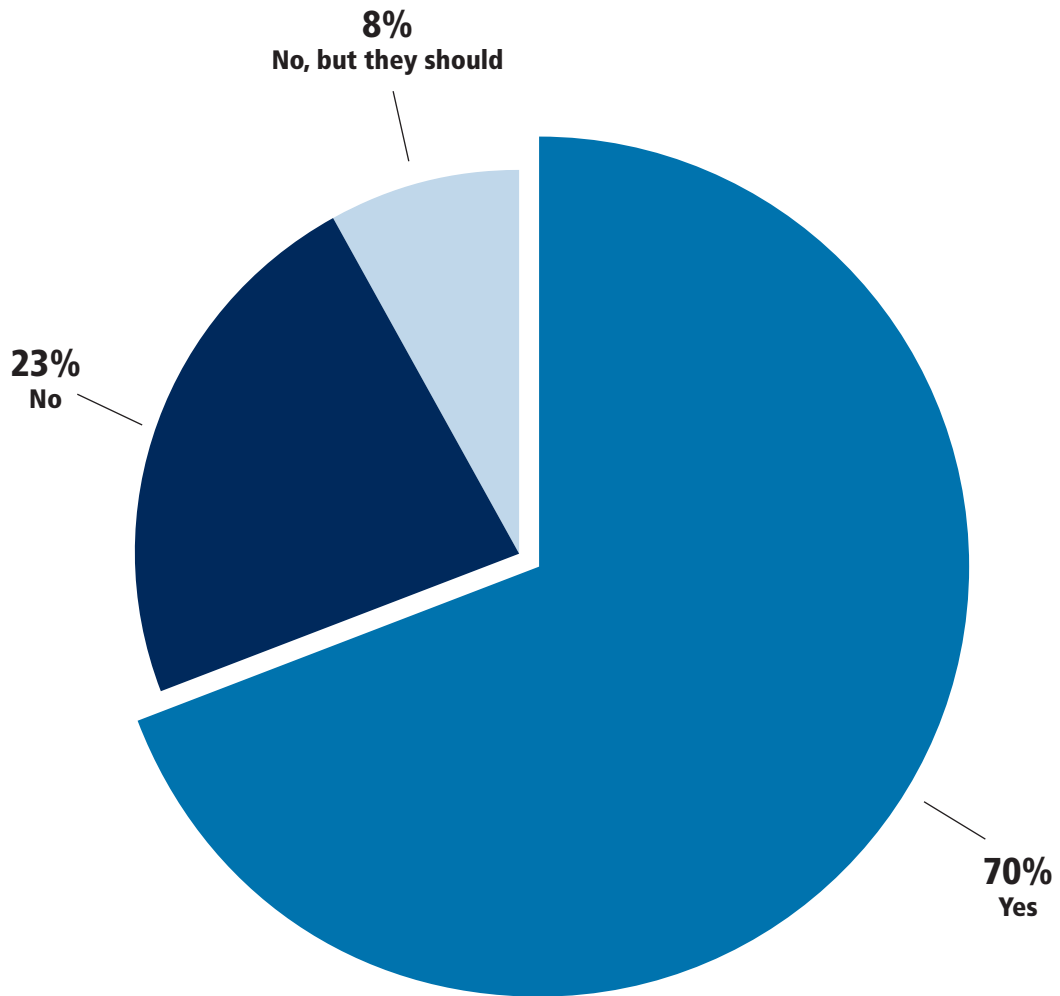
All Responding DAOMs



Expanding Your Reach
in Alternative Healthcare

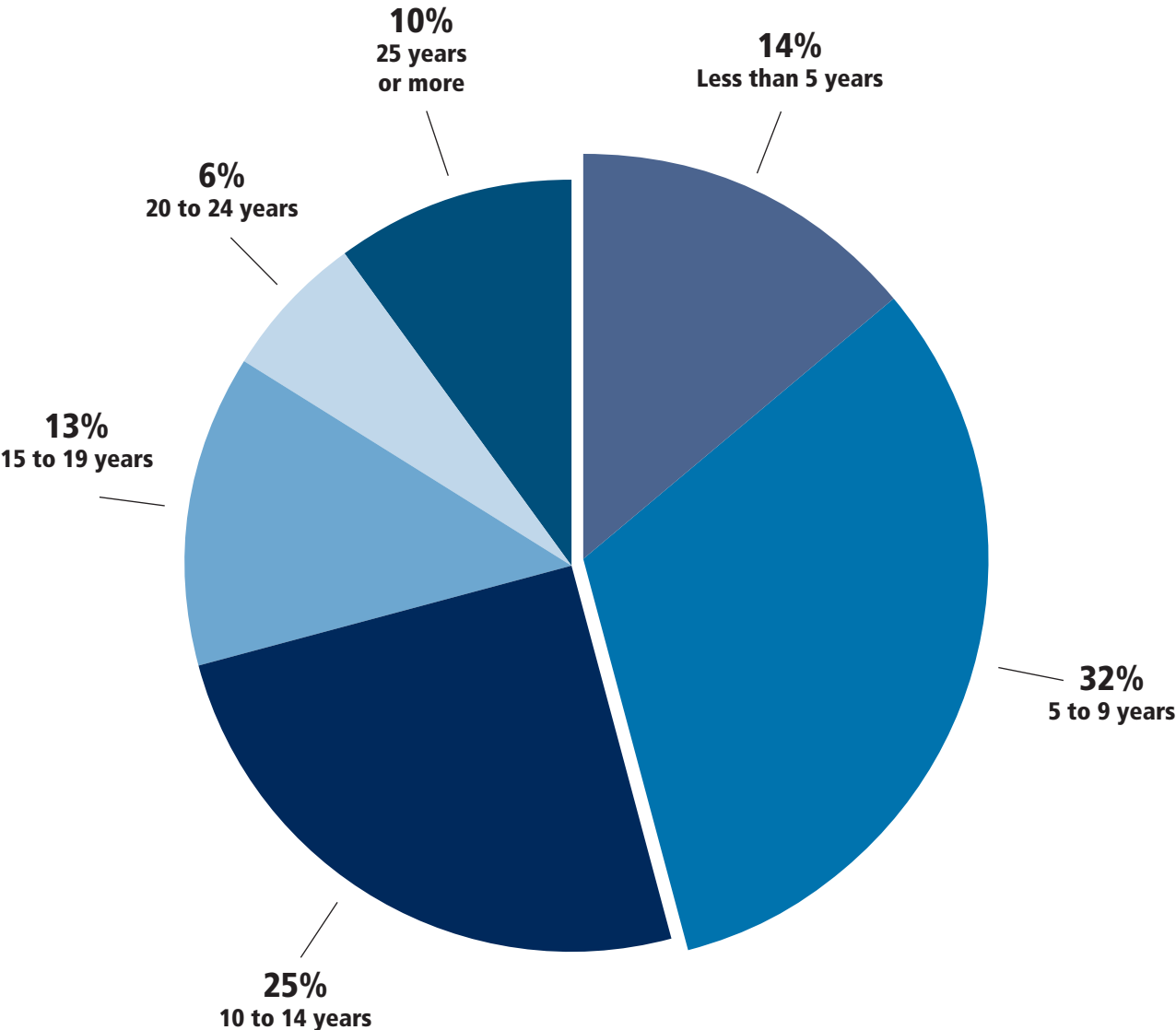
8. Does your staff take the nutritional supplements that you recommend to your patients?

All Responding DAOMs



9. How long have you been in practice?

All Responding DAOMs



10. What is your age?

All Responding DAOMs

